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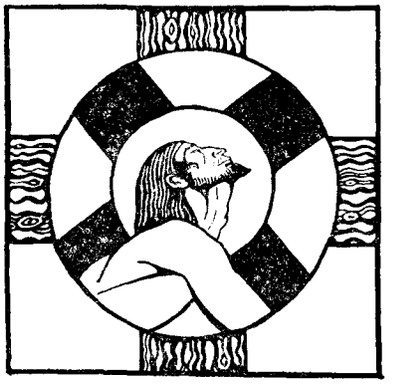

NEW LENTEN READING

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Written and Illustrated by Caryll Houselander

Reading this made us sad all over again that the author had died; the writing is so fresh, the ideas so new. We think it will prove one of her most popular books—and surely, THE book for Lenten reading this year. The illustrations here reproduced are from this book. $2.75

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The Commonweal
week by week

THE CONTINUING CRISIS

WHAT Sir Winston Churchill has described as "a mystery wrapped in an enigma" continues to baffle the best intelligence in the West. The news from the Communist world—of a shakeup in the Soviet hierarchy and a new "tough" line in the Kremlin's foreign policy, of Peiping's increasing intransigence and determination to assault Formosa—provides columnists and editorial writers with limitless material for speculation on Communist intentions, but from most of the speculation only one clear lesson emerges: of the futility of speculation where the totalitarian mind is concerned.

The disgrace of Mr. Malenkov and the emergence of Mr. Khrushchev (or, perhaps, Marshal Zhukov? —or even Marshal Bulganin?) as the major contender for Stalin's power emphasizes the danger of making any absolute prediction of what effects may follow from Communist causes. On the one hand, various experts point out that as First Secretary of the Communist Party Mr. Khrushchev is following the same road to dictatorship as Josef Stalin did. They cite the fact that Khrushchev nominated Marshal Bulganin for the premiership as a clear indication that Bulganin is merely his creature and that the real power already lies in Khrushchev's hands. And they find in Mr. Molotov's fiery foreign policy speech confirmation of their worst fears that with Malenkov's fall the era of "coexistence" is over and a time of probable war has come.

Other experts disagree. Mr. Khrushchev, they say, is already too old to establish himself as Russia's absolute ruler, and, they remind us, if it was Khrushchev who nominated Bulganin for the premiership, it was Beria who, only two years ago, nominated Mr. Malenkov for the same post. All signs point, they think, to a continuing struggle for power, a struggle in which it is much too early to say who may finally triumph—or, indeed, if any one man will finally triumph. Mr. Molotov's tough talk is thus seen as a brave posture to hide the Soviet Union's internal troubles. And with such troubles, the argument runs, the danger that Russia will take serious risks of war has decreased.

Similar expert disagreements exist over the question of Red China's intentions in the Formosa Straits. As has been observed before, a totalitarian world is one in which words are divorced from meaning, in which war can mean peace, and peace war, in which the objective has been, by decree, abolished. Whether or not Peiping's bellicose words thus mean actual bellicose intentions, or whether, in the face of United States force, a *de facto* cease fire will be permitted to prevail, is something no one in the West, really, knows.

IN view of these ambiguities, what possible conclusions can be drawn as at least tentative guides to action? There are, of course, the obvious conclusions, the ones that have become clichés: the West must keep up its guard; it must remain strong and firm; it must turn its back on appeasement. With these conclusions it is impossible to disagree; it is, indeed, a good thing for our survival that they have become clichés through constant repetition, for if we should forget them we are most certainly lost. But they are not enough either. They are not adequate substitutes for a policy to minimize the threat of atomic disaster. The West's policy must certainly be based on strength, but it must remain flexible too, uncommitted to any premises of "inevitable war," open to the realities of power situations as they develop, ready to seize any opportunities for easing world tensions that may open up.

In the case of the new Soviet shakeup, for example, it would be folly to assume that internal troubles in Russia mean a breathing spell for the West. But it would be equal folly to assume that they mean the end of all hope for an eventual *modus vivendi* between the two world camps. Those who now assure us that all hope of coexistence is ended have yet to tell us where we should go from there. To another planet, perhaps?

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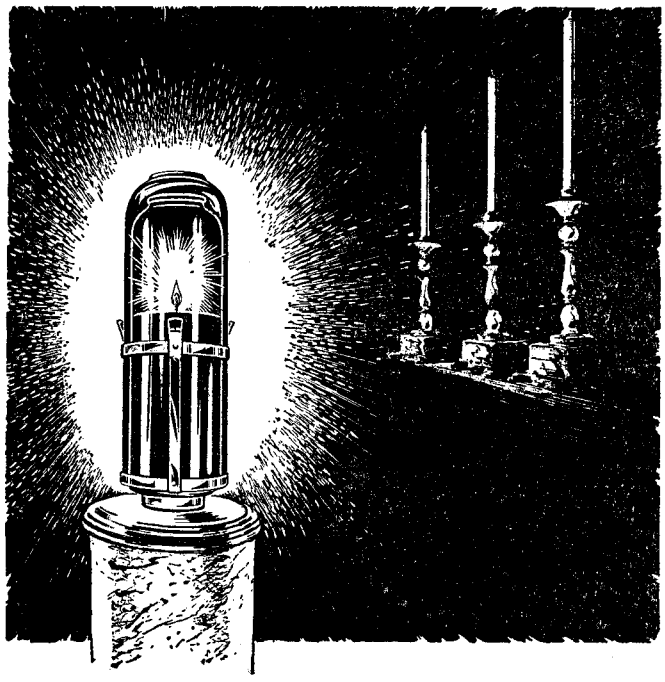

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THE COMMONWEAL
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The situation we face in the Formosa crisis is similar. Provocations and threats of war from Peiping are used by some in the United States as the occasion for demanding extended and absolute commitments to Chiang Kai-shek. There must, we hear, be no negotiation, now or forever, with the Chinese Communists, no abandonment of the off-shore islands no matter what the price. On Matsu, we are told, or on Quemoy, we must take our stand—with atom bombs, if necessary, and, if necessary, alone.

In the world's continuing crisis the Eisenhower Administration continues to exercise an admirable restraint—a refusal to be carried away by predictions either of inevitable war or of an easy peace. In this forceful restraint the Administration deserves wide bipartisan support, for here lies our only long-range hope. The Communist enigma leaves us no choice but to prepare for the worst, but it does not commit us to accepting the worst. We must not cease to explore whatever roads may lead the world away from it.

DEPRESSION IN A VALLEY

ONE-INDUSTRY and company towns are often the first to fall victim to dips in the American business cycle. Sometimes the national economy is even moving ahead when these communities begin to experience real difficulties. Fashions change or the commodity an area produces is supplanted, as coal has given way to oil, or the local factories themselves become outmoded or uneconomic. Whatever the reason, there are large-scale layoffs.

This sets in motion an ever-deepening local crisis. Sales drop off in neighborhood stores and orders for things like domestic appliances are canceled. Cars are taken off the road to save on insurance premiums, while credit companies start taking back goods purchased on instalments. Anxious homeowners take to visiting their local banks with desperate mortgage problems.

Such is the present picture in the lower Mohawk Valley in New York State, west of Albany. Despite an industrious and able work force, plentiful power and transportation facilities and well-established communities, the economy is slowing down. Young people are drifting to other cities in search of jobs. Workers are trying to hang on to their homes, many of which they have built with their own hands, and are talking of plowing up their lawns this spring in order to grow vegetables.

In Amsterdam the carpet industry is said to be badly hit by the waning popularity of the colorful Axminster type of rug. Gloversville and Johnstown suffer from a slackening demand for gloves: as cars have heaters, fewer men wear gloves and women have turned to fabric gloves, which can be turned out in many colors.

The main answer to this is diversification of production, the attracting of a number of a new and expanding industries to the lower Mohawk region. This is a task which has been brought on a new degree of cooperation among all elements of the community. New England, with its loss of 275,000 jobs in the textile industry since 1920, has shown time and again what can be done in the way of attracting or developing new industries. It has likewise been demonstrated by the hard-coal area of eastern Pennsylvania in recent years.

But as the number of depressed areas increases the competition between cities for productive enterprises becomes more intense. Before long the point may come when an enterprise cannot be enticed to move to one city by all manner of inducements on the part of the local chamber of commerce without creating critical conditions in the place it is vacating. When that stage is reached, a state of national emergency is not far off. All of which tends to indicate that the forces of private enterprise and of local and state government, at least, must join to repulse at their inception such inroads upon their economy as are now confronting a number of towns and cities in the Mohawk Valley.

PAY BOOST FOR CONGRESS

AT least twice in the last couple of years the editors of this magazine have urged Congressmen to take action on raising their own pay. Similar sentiments have been expressed by many other editors and writers. Indeed, at one time or another probably every responsible journal in the country has urged such a course.

Such near-unanimity is rare. But it is easy enough to see why the issue of pay raises for Congress subdues the partisan and argumentative in most editorial breasts. The case for raising the pay of Senators, Representatives and judges is almost overwhelming.

Take judges, for example. They earn a fraction of what a skilled lawyer can make in private practice. Yet they should be the best in the field. Or consider the case of a Congressman. Expenses in Washington are high, and the income of a Congressman does not compare with that of an executive in private industry, although the responsibility he bears is immeasurably greater. On present salaries, a Congressman may just get by, often depending on fees for lectures or other out-

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side income to help him over the rough spots. In such a situation, twin dangers obviously exist. Politics may come to attract only lesser men, or politics may become a field into which only the rich can safely venture.

Congress and the judiciary have had only one raise in pay in the last thirty years, and that one was received almost ten years ago. The boost now proposed for Congressmen would give them a salary in the neighborhood of twenty-five thousand dollars a year; judges would receive proportionate increases. Under this scale, many professional men and upper-level executives would still make more money than Congressmen and judges. But the financial penalties for entering government service would at least be reduced.

Traditionally, of course, Congressmen are afraid to touch this issue, on the theory that an outraged electorate will promptly boot out of office any Representative or Senator who dares to vote for a raise in his own salary. For our part, we doubt this thesis very seriously. A few newspapers, it is true, do continue to play to the mob on this issue, editorially sneering at any suggestion that such raises are in order. But we think they represent a minority point of view. Now that the issue is up again for consideration, it seems to us the time has come to put the theory to the test.

"THE INVESTIGATOR"

ON May 30th of last year the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation broadcast a play called "The Investigator." This play was a satirical account of the adventures after death of a sonorous-voiced "Investigator" given to rumbling phrases like "Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman, point of order." The real-life model for the "Investigator" was about as hard to identify as the model for Chaplin's "The Great Dictator."

This radio broadcast was recorded, and to the embarrassment of Canadian officials was brought into the United States and sold as a long-playing disc by a formerly obscure firm called Discuriosities.

Jack Gould, radio editor of the New York *Times,* heard the record and gave it an enthusiastic notice in his column. Then the *New Republic's* anonymous Washington correspondent, "T.R.B.," extolled it, comparing it to Orwell's *Animal Farm.* And *The Reporter's* radio and television writer also joined the chorus of admiration.

All of these writers failed to mention one fact about "The Investigator." It is a scrupulous dramatization of the Stalinist line on Senator McCarthy and Congressional investigations in general, and is a powerful influence in confusing all of the distinctions which this magazine, for one, thought were by this time pretty well understood by anti-McCarthy liberals.

"The Investigator" explicitly denies the existence of Communist subversion, implicitly denies the existence of Communist totalitarianism, and is based on the premise that all of the people investigated by the "Investigator" are Thomas Jeffersons, John Miltons, and Thomas Paines. Thus the "Investigator" is not a demagogue who is exploiting a nation's fear of the very real danger of Communist subversion and the extension of Soviet totalitarianism, a man who by his lack of respect for the methods of democracy is damaging the cause of freedom. Rather, he is a crypto-fascist trampling invariably innocent martyrs into the dust of a committee-room floor.

This is precisely the point of view which the Communists have attempted to put across about Senator McCarthy and the point of view which those who despise Communist totalitarianism just as cordially as they despise fascist totalitarianism have—at the risk of ruining their lungs and exhausting their typewriters—been trying to defeat.

But Messrs. Gould and "T.R.B.," and the lady columnist at *The Reporter,* apparently consider these distinctions unimportant—unimportant, at least, so long as the target of the satire is Senator McCarthy. We think that the record is very funny too; but we think that the failure of the writers in the *Times,* the *New Republic* and *The Reporter* to point out that "The Investigator" is totalitarian propaganda is less amusing; and we think that "T.R.B." 's comparison of it with *Animal Farm* would set the late George Orwell spinning in the turf like a gyroscope.

NEXT WEEK

PETER VIERECK writes about attitudes toward change in the contemporary world.

"Since the post-atomic world is changing more rapidly than ever before, the attitude of a political thinker toward change and his willingness to accept its inevitability is a key test of his grasp of reality. No conservative is so unrealistic as to deny or refuse change. He differs from others in the framework within which he canalizes change. The radical wishes revolutionary change, outside the free traditional framework; the reactionary wishes counter-revolutionary change, likewise outside the established framework ('back to 1788' or 'back to 1932'), or else hopes, like King Canute, to resist change and social progress altogether."

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Vision in the Novels

"THE FUTURE HAS NEVER, SINCE MAN COULD READ AND WRITE, BEEN LESS VALID AS AN INCENTIVE TO ACTION THAN THE PAST"

ANNE FREMANTLE

SCRIPTURE warns us that "without vision, the people perish," and elsewhere promises, as a great treat, that Israel's young men shall see visions and her old men dream dreams. In the recorded history of man, it may well be that the visions, of the future, of other worlds, of the shape of things to come, have played as great a part as the remembrance of things past. Indeed, the future has never, since man could read and write, been less valid as an incentive to action than the past; today, Marxist doctrine bears testimony to the tremendous effect the future has on man's present behavior.

In so far as the English language is concerned, "visions" of the temporal future seem to date from the Reformation—partly, perhaps, owing to the spread at that time of such earlier visions as Plato's and Campanella's through the discovery of printing and the increase of copies of books, partly, perhaps, as a result of the truly traumatic experience that the Reformation was for England. Cut off, suddenly, and separated not only from the whole of Catholic Christendom (still the greater part of the Continent of Europe), England was even more cut off by the Reformation from the last thousand years of her own past.

Sir Thomas Malory's realistic medievalism marks the end of an era as much as St. Thomas More's *Utopia* marks the beginning of another. For there was to be no more looking backward to the Catholic past, until the Romantic revival sublimated the traumatic effect of the Reformation by running towards it "by backward steps," as Thomas Traherne put it, to a fanciful feudal society, full of automatically incomplete *belles dames* and silver chalices emptied of the blood of a God made flesh.

From Bacon to Swift the prophetic gradually sharpens into the political, and by the mid-nineteenth century past and future both are pressed into the service of socialism. Bulwer-Lytton's vision, *The Coming Race* of subterranean men, may seem purely romantic, but with Richard Jefferies' *After London* a definitely new visionary novel emerges, in which new worlds are created primarily to redress the wrongs of the old. *After London* is wonderfully told. The shepherd boy who, with his foot, turns up relics of the once-great city of London, the gradual piecing together of the history of the catastrophe that overwhelmed it, the pastoral piety of the succeeding race, are all most readable today.

SAMUEL Butler's *Erewhon,* first published serially in a New Zealand newspaper in 1863 as "Darwin Among the Machines," appeared in England in 1872. The first edition sold out in three weeks; it has been reprinted innumerable times, and every subsequent science fictionalist owes Samuel Butler a debt. The tale of the beautiful people of the country where ill health is a crime and crime a disease, where property is robbery, where all machines were destroyed, has become as much a classic as *Gulliver's Travels.*

The most interesting ideas of the Erewhonians (Erewhon is like Serutan, and their goddess, Ydgrun, is our old friend Mrs. Grundy) are about time. For them: "We are drawn through life backwards. . . . Time walks beside us and flings back shutters as we advance; but the light thus given often dazzles us, and deepens the darkness which is in front. . . . For the future is there as much as the past, only that we may not see it." They believe too that the unborn solicit to be born, and, living in a state of bodiless bliss, must apply to their magistrates for permission to quit their then existence. The magistrates try to dissuade them, telling them that "to be born is a felony," a capital crime, for which sentence may be executed at any moment after the commission of the offense: "Remember that if you go into the world you will have free will; that you will be obliged to have it; that there is no escaping it."

William Morris' *News from Nowhere* was a kind of combination forward and backward book; it was both a romantic regression to an imagined etiolated medievalism, and a socialist blueprint for distributists, wholewheat breaders, and anti-industrializationists gen-

Mrs. Fremantle, a contributing editor of The Commonweal, has recently edited *The Visionary Novels of George Macdonald* and *The Age of Belief.*

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erally. Much more solid, and much better worked out, was the American Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*—2000-1887. By 1900 this book had sold over a million copies, and it is said to have influenced H. G. Wells. His *When the Sleeper Awakes* is supposedly derived from Bellamy's book. Bellamy was a serious and widely read socialist writer, yet his one incursion into phantasy brought him far greater fame and fortune than all his writings on equality and reform. *Looking Backward* is not as pleasant as *Erewhon*; it contains fewer ideas, and more socialist doctrine; so much of what is there prophesied has already come true that the book seems not dated, but a trifle dull.

The romantic visions of the future implications of modern science and technology were not, even in Victorian days, all sweetness and light. Sometimes the liberation from the conscious levels of the mind led not to Paradise, but towards the other place. So George Macdonald's foolish Mr. Vane, in *Lilith,* fidgeting with the mirrors in his attic, or with his father's books in the library, finds himself in the fourth dimension, a place with which Thoreau and Novalis were familiar, and the Shakespeare of *The Tempest* too. Edmund Gosse in his *Omphalos* was at the civilized, as H. Rider Haggard was at the primitive, level of such escapes inward.

At the turn of the century, H. G. Wells marks the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century visionary. In his own long, splendid sequence of prophetic books, he mirrors the change from a mild meliorism mish-mashed with Marxism, to the starkly eschatological position of such writers as Aldous Huxley, George Orwell and Robert Henlein. In *The Time Machine* Wells looked forward to 802,701; in *When the Sleeper Awakes* he is but two hundred years ahead, and in the autocracy ruled by Ostrog, he foreshadows Nazism clearly. Yet Wells was then still hopeful.

"As Christians have dreamt of the new Jerusalem, so does Socialism, growing ever more temperate, potent, forgiving and resolute, set its face to the world city of mankind" he wrote around 1900. In *The Time Machine,* however, he does wonder what would occur "if cruelty had grown into a common passion?" In *The Land Ironclads*, an amazing preview of tanks (1903), when "something between a big blockhouse and a giant's dishcover . . . an insect the size of an iron-clad cruiser wins the war, the victors prove kindly; the half a dozen comparatively slender young men in blue pajamas drinking coffee and eating biscuits" who emerge from the monster's belly are more like the GIs in *A Bell for Adano* than the sinister judges of Erewhon for whom "the infliction of pain upon the weak and sickly was the only means of preventing weakness and sickliness from spreading."

World War I weathered Wells into a sadder and a wiser man. Thereafter he spoke contemptuously of Auguste Comte or Frederic Harrison, who thought that finally humanity would "sit down again on a higher plane for good and all, cultured and happy, in a reorganized positivist state." He even came gradually to a belief in God. A Manichaean God, who, "closer than heart or breathing, nearer than hands or feet" suffers in and with each of His creatures, but cannot help them; rather they can help Him in His struggle against the Other.

In one of his last books, the delightful *All Aboard for Ararat* (1940) Wells makes God say to Noah that as the world went along "I became less and less of an Almighty Father, and more and more like a skittle alley attendant." Both Father D'Arcy and Vernon Lee take Wells to task for his impotent God: take away omnipotence, Father D'Arcy declared in an article in *The Month* in 1917, and love becomes a sentiment; why, asks Vernon Lee, should Utopia be only Utopia, if you don't accept the Fall. Either-or, she insists logically. Either man is the master of his fate or Someone else is.

Yet what a prophet Wells was! "Politically the Russian government may come to dominate China (in the coming decades) but the reality beneath any such formal predominance will be the absorption of Russia beyond the range of the European pull by the Synthesis of Eastern Asia." That, written in 1902, might be used in an editorial of 1955.

BUT if H. G. Wells is the visionary writer who combines in himself the nineteenth and twentieth century visions, bifurcated by World War I, it is a Catholic, Monsignor Hugh Benson, whose *Lord of the World* most nearly foreshadows *Brave New World* or *1984.*

Lord of the World, published in 1907, predicts the apparent triumph of evil; the faithful are reduced to a tiny handful; Anti-Christ, so like Christ that even the faithful are deceived, reigns triumphant. The world is divided into the Eastern Empire, from the Urals to the China Sea, including India and Africa, and the American Empire. War has been endemic between them. A spoilt priest, Francis, becomes the minister of the mysterious Julian Felsenburgh, an American who makes peace on earth, and becomes Lord President

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first of Europe, then of the world. Against him is the book's hero, Father Percy Franklin, a priest who ultimately becomes Pope, because no other priest survives. Benson delights in outlining the gruesome aspects of total war: whole towns will be destroyed by a single shell; fleets of airships, silent, "volors," will annihilate cities; populations will be wiped out. England is now completely socialist. In 1929 the Established Church had fallen; the House of Lords in 1935. The Necessary Trades Bill of 1960, with the whole nation behind it, had municipalized first the railways, then the banks, then the mines, and finally all the chief industries. Since six per cent was the highest return permitted on any individual enterprise, everyone had drifted into government employment, and practically every employable male was a civil servant. Ninety-nine per cent of the working class had concurred in the abolition of the Poor Laws, and in the reformation of death duties; inherited wealth now paid three times the amount paid by earned income.

The prevailing creed is an optimistic pantheism. God is Man, Man is God. There are a few pockets of Catholicism left; the Church is tolerated in England; the Pope has traded all the churches in Italy for the sovereignty of the City of Rome; Ireland has remained remote and Christian. The universities are no more; with the general decay of belief in the numinous, the character and competence required of graduates had gone unused. So some universities became laboratories, some engineering workshops, some museums.

The most interesting pages in *Lord of the World* are those devoted to describing the new religion. Materialism, taken baldly, has failed. Instead, as Swinburne sang, there is "Glory to Man in the Highest." Benson has been very skillful in showing the mystical appeal of such a cult. When Julian Felsenburgh, who is the "Other," is proclaimed President, war is outlawed, and it is made "treason to humanity" to appeal from God Immanent to God Transcendent. For there is, Felsenburgh declares, no God Transcendent. God, as far as He could, or should, be known, is Man. "Mysteries there were, but mysteries that enticed rather than baffled, and they unfolded new glories with every discovery that man could make; even inanimate objects, the fossil, the electric current, the far-off stars, these were dust thrown off by the Spirit of the World, fragrant with His presence, and eloquent of His nature."

Benson is at his ablest in showing the terrible dangers lurking in such a creed. At first the deviation from Truth is hardly perceptible, for God is indeed Immanent, and the error appears to be only in a slightly exaggerated emphasis. But step by step, the seed of evil grows into a towering tree of horrific all-overshadowing; satanic majesty. At first, all is sweetness and light. The churches are reopened and solemnly dedicated to "the glorious creed of humanity, to that splendid God who died and rose again 10,000 times a day, who had died daily, like that old cracked fanatic, Paul of Tarsus, ever since the world began, and who rose again, not once, like the carpenter's son, but with every child that comes into the world." The bloody specter of the Cross is conjured, and Mabel joins in the general rejoicing that every individual can meet death gladly, content "to sink back into the reservoir from which he drew his life. The supreme, generous sacrifice, is to lay down one's life because life itself demanded it."

MONSIGNOR Benson's account of the stages by which persecution sets in are anticipatory in detail of what has happened and is happening. The people, long deceived by the cruel religion of the Galilean, find that the religion of humanity which Felsenburgh teaches abolishes suffering, but first one of suffering's most savage instruments must be abolished: that Church which embraces suffering and teaches that "the blind pangs even of beasts are within the Father's will and scheme." When the religion of humanity is made compulsory, "the human race becomes now a single entity, with a supreme responsibility towards itself." There were no longer any private rights at all, such as had previously existed. "Man now possessed dominion over every cell which composed His mystical body, and where any such cell asserted itself to the detriment of the body, the rights of the whole were unqualified."

Benson shows, far more clearly even than Butler, that it is the human factor, not the mechanical, that constitutes the horrifying danger of the atomic age: not that atomic fission has been achieved, but that I, and you, and every one of us, are able to fission it. Huxley's *Brave New World* added nothing to Benson's vision of man grown cancer. Mustapha Mond, his dictator, is no atheist: "I think quite probably there is a God," he states, and that He "manifests Himself as an absence."

George Orwell's *1984* is, indeed, the prophetic novel pushed to the limit of reader endurance. It is a vision so ghastly that with it nothing the dying Franz Werfel imagined in his last book, nothing even Franz Kafka stated in *The Trial,* can quite compare. The latest Huxley is almost pleasant in comparison, for at least at the end of *Ape and Essence* there is an affirmation of the three theological virtues that is quite cosy. But in the delineation of Julian Felsenburgh and Big Brother there is present the whole terror of the Gospel. Here, it would seem, the prophetic vision has, at least temporarily, reached its limit. We must wait to see if a new imaginative literature can project another future before this terrible vision is upon us.

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FROM ITALY

The Bourgeois Communists

Rome

NOT since the fall of Fascism has Italy been afflicted with more scandals and counter-scandals than during the past year. Respectable conservative newspapers and opposition papers alike have been full of news of a kind that has compelled old-fashioned fathers to hide the papers from their children. The leitmotiv in all this seems to have been the word "bourgeois": bourgeois corruption, bourgeois hypocrisy, bourgeois moral dissolution and empty bourgeois cant. These slogans were not only hammered into the public mind by the Communists, but were accepted by the bourgeoisie as a means of self-defense, self-investigation, and, ultimately, self-accusation.

It started with the Montesi scandal, which soon attracted attention all over Europe. A young girl was found dead on a beach near Rome. It became clear that the authorities had not investigated her death properly, and the chief of police and Christian Democratic Foreign Minister Attilio Piccioni (whose son was arrested and accused of the murder) were forced to resign. A sufficient amount of corruption and vice was unveiled at the trial and investigations to provoke a wave of disgust throughout Italy. So this was Italy's ruling class!—such was the reaction of the man in the street. All the corruption seemed to have this common denominator: practically all of the accused, the exposed and the compromised belonged to what traditionally is understood as the bourgeoisie. It was child's play for Communist propaganda to indict the whole social class.

The social character of the corruption was so predominant that in spite of the fact that the Christian Democratic party was politically involved in the scandal, even the Communists soon dropped attempts to drag the Vatican and the Catholic Church as such into the mess; it seemed impossible to get a proper Catholic angle on it. To friends and foes alike, the Christian Democratic party's role was that of a bourgeois party, and as such was it attacked.

The turning point came when the counter-scandal broke. The great accuser in the Montesi trial, an extremely able and ruthless Communist lawyer named Giuseppe Sotgiu, a true Cato flogging "bourgeois corruption" who enjoyed the sympathies of innumerable non-political citizens, was exposed as a worthy follower of Casanova, a man with abnormal aspects to his private life. The shock was tremendous. But the disgust was increased when it became evident that the people he had been attacking were the ones responsible for exposing him. They were attempting to use the counter-scandal to excuse their own sins. The Communists, they said, who have so righteously attacked us, are as rotten as they have accused us of being; and if they don't shut up, we have more trouble in store for them!

THE effect of this was increased when the neo-fascists stepped in and published pictures of the Montesi trial defendants, together with a picture of the exposed Communist lawyer, over the following caption: "This is Democratic Italy, which is said to be better than Fascist Italy!" And the reaction of the man in the street was that everyone was using everybody else's sins to cover up his own; the intention was to cover up everything, and to blackmail the Communist attack into silence.

The disconcerted Italian citizen knew from his own experience that the immense majority of the Italian people are decent. But who was responsible for all of this corruption? At this point something most unexpected happened. A well-known political writer named Giovanni Ansaldo, highly regarded in spite of his fascist past, said in the equally respected rightist weekly *Il Borghese* ("The Bourgeois"): "To which social class does the exposed Communist lawyer belong? To the bourgeoisie. He owns a beautiful collection of modern art, two comfortable flats in Rome, a villa in Ostia and extensive inherited land on the island of Sardinia. In other words," Ansaldo went on, "he is a typical representative of bourgeois leaders in

the Communist Party who in many cases have brought into the Party a typically bourgeois moral dissolution. If the Communists should ever gain power," he concluded, "this corruption within the Party would be no better than the corruption which the Communists now attack."

Italy's bourgeoisie could not have judged themselves

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more severely. The extraordinary thing was that this judgment came not from the Communists but from a bourgeois quarter. The conclusion was obvious not only to the Communists and fellow travelers, but to the bourgeoisie themselves: bourgeoisie equals corruption. Thus the victim of the counter-scandal was the bourgeoisie—the poor Italian bourgeoisie, already under heavy attack in modern Italian literature and the famous neo-realistic Italian motion pictures (which are made by bourgeois writers and bourgeois directors).

ALL of this attracted attention to the fact that within the Italian Communist Party—the biggest and most influential in the West—there are many bourgeois in leading positions. Quite aside from the "*Salonskommunisten*," the aristocratic or highbrow Communists, there is a majority within the ruling central committee of the Party who are not only of bourgeois origin but behave like bourgeois, dress like bourgeois and have bourgeois taste in home furnishings and art, etc. The minority, who are of authentic proletarian origin, behave and dress and live like other proletarians who have made good and are moving into the bourgeois class. This is true not only of the Italian Communist Party but of Communist Parties all over the world. The big three of Communism, Marx, Engels and Lenin, were all of bourgeois origin. Generally speaking, the proportion between bourgeois and proletarian seems to be roughly the same among Communist leaders as among the leaders of any other political party nowadays.

This in turn attracted attention to the reasons why all these members of the bourgeoisie have become Communists, for the proportion is true not only of the leadership but of the rank and file. What is it that attracts them to a movement which wills the death of everything traditionally bourgeois? Is it a sort of collective instinct for class self-destruction? Is it that the fittest of the bourgeoisie are taking leadership among even the worst enemies of their own bourgeoisie?

It turned out that the most common reason was a sort of instinctive reaction against the bourgeois class, its alleged narrow-minded conservatism for conservatism's sake, its lack of ideas, its Pharisaical forebearance towards its own moral decadence. In short, it was a reaction against the bourgeois qualities which were so brilliantly illuminated by the Montesi scandal. These "bourgeois deserters" are simply disgusted with their own class, which, according to them, is so decayed that it no longer deserves leadership. To cure this, they believe that what traditionally is understood as bourgeois—the whole capitalist system—has to be swept away. None of the arguments about the true nature and consequences of Communism has any effect on them. They reply that the fire, no matter how painful it might be, is a purifying flame—God's punishment on the bourgeois Sodom and Gomorrah.

At the same time, nearly all of these bourgeois Communists have that romantic love of the proletarian —which they share with many leftist intellectuals—as something in itself purer and better than the degenerate bourgeoisie. Even the authentic proletarian's primitiveness, his clumsiness and brutality, his lack of manners and personal cleanliness, seem to attract them. His very faults seem to have something forceful and excusable about them—for they are not bourgeois faults. It has been pointed out that this state of mind is reminiscent of the fashion prevalent among European upper classes just before the French Revolution —to consider the "good savage," so eloquently described by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, as better and purer than the degenerate civilized man—better and purer only by virtue of being a savage.

The same proportion of "bourgeois deserters," holding the same attitude towards their own class, is to be found in practically all countries where Communism is strong or progressing and where, as in Italy, a great part of the bourgeois intellectual élite is consciously or unconsciously attracted to Communism—or at least vicariously shares in the discrediting of the bourgeois class. And the proletarians, the authentic proletarians, follow their largely-bourgeois leaders with discipline. They follow bourgeois leaders in a struggle against the bourgeois' own class and against the capitalistic system which this class has built up in the tolerant atmosphere of Western democracy. It is not true that these "bourgeois deserters" render Communism bourgeois in turn and moderate it, as has been argued in Italy. Experience in the Communist countries shows that these rulers who are of bourgeois origin are as ruthless as their proletarian colleagues—or if they are not, they are soon purged. But it is true that Communism would not have such success among the four-fifths of humanity which is economically underdeveloped if it were not for the direct and indirect help it receives from bourgeois intellectual deserters.

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN.

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The MacArthur Speech

IN his San Francisco speech General MacArthur said it, and I don't suppose that any sane man could deny that what he said was true. General MacArthur argued that war should be totally abolished.

Now there is nothing particularly original about advocating the end of war. The card-carrying pacifists have been doing so for many years. So have Popes and pundits. Even statesmen in their more reflective pauses from the business of equipping armies and inspecting military defenses have joined in the chorus. Other generals have often condemned war and have spoken out in compassion for the people war hurts. But this was different.

MacArthur is a humanitarian but he is no pacifist. Just a few years ago he was at the center of a controversy whirling about the whole concept of a "limited war"—which, I gather, he regards like a limited pregnancy. A war—any war—may be a terrible thing, but a war is a war and it is fought for one reason alone, and that is to win it. Not to win it is to lose it. Losing is a painful but a tolerable idea, since war is essentially a contest. But not to have any winner, only losers, is to defeat the logic of war itself. It is to waste blood and the substance of men wantonly.

That, I take it, is what Douglas MacArthur, who spent his life as a soldier, said at San Francisco. The nature of war has so changed that it can no longer settle what it was devised to settle. A nuclear war will mean the utter devastation of all belligerents. One side, of course, may be technically the winner, but the atomic scientists have been consistent in predicting mutual annihilation.

It is time, says General MacArthur, speaking as a soldier, to banish war. War never did prove who was right. It may have proved who was braver. It cannot even prove that any more. The only thing it can prove now is that mass extermination is scientifically possible. It is time to banish war.

The speech was given to a crowd who had gathered to mark the unveiling of a MacArthur monument. Inscribed on the monument are the General's famous words: "In war there is no substitute for victory." These words might have again served as MacArthur's text, though they were originally used in quite a different setting. He was telling his San Francisco admirers that what he had said during the bitter controversy with President Truman was still true. Then he said a "limited war" was absurd because there was no substitute for victory. Now he said that the nature of nuclear war has outlawed victory as a possibility for either side, so the whole idea of war is logically monstrous. The question he ignored and that still goes unanswered is, what acceptable substitute is there for war?

There are, of course, many substitutes for war. There is peaceful arbitration, for instance. There is compromise. There is appeasement. There is skillful diplomacy. But for each of these the possibility of war seems to be a component. Successful arbitration depends either on mutual good will (obviously absent in the present situation) or on the crude mathematics of power; and in our world, power means the capacity to apply force. Compromise depends either on the conviction that nothing essential is at stake (both sides in the present struggle reject that idea) or on the fear of power's being applied, which is to say on the fear of losing a showdown war. Appeasement, again, is motivated by fear of war and, history shows, almost inevitably results in war. Successful diplomacy must have a power base—which is to say the possibility of war must be present—or it never gets off the ground. Wherever we turn we are left with war as a threat, a possibility or an ultimate resort. What is the substitute for war?

Prayers, say the pious—and they ask for miracles. Perhaps they will have their miracles. But even the pious, who pray for peace, do not demand that we disarm our country and send our troops home while the Russians and the Chinese stock up. Passive resistance, say the pacifists. There are only a handful of pacifists. They are personally willing to be struck without striking back, but when war comes they have to go off one by one in their silent protest while the bombs fall and their countrymen fly off to drop more bombs.

The pacifists are logical; it is the world which is illogical. The pacifists though seem never to be able to convince the illogical world to be logical. The non-pacifist world operates on the strange but compelling logic of the idea that it has survived only because it has remained illogical on this question. If a war broke out tomorrow, General MacArthur, who gave the anti-war speech in San Francisco, would be the first to volunteer his services. It takes two to make a quarrel. It takes two pacifists to avoid a quarrel. The trouble is there are never enough pacifists to go round. The pacifists may have found *their* substitute for war. But I don't think they have yet found everyone else's substitute for war—and until they do there will still be wars and rumors of wars.

Where then do we turn? General MacArthur spoke of outlawing war and he was applauded by his admirers, who were once very angry because they said he was not allowed to win the Korean war. The *Herald Tribune* in New York and other papers throughout the country praised the magnificence and steely logic of the General's speech, but no editorial writer suggested that we close down Fort Dix or let all the Marines go home. Only *Time* spoke of the MacArthur speech as if it were the idle prattling of a vain old man. Most of us read it, agreed sadly with its logic and then wondered how far our troops should go in the Formosa area.

JOHN COGLEY.

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THE SCREEN

FUN-LOVING MARINES AND MEDICS

THERE are enough plots in "Battle Cry" to take care of several movies, but Leon M. Uris, who wrote the script from his own novel, chose to wrap them all up in one package under the general heading of wartime behaviorism. "Battle Cry" starts with the training of a group of Marine Corps recruits in January 1942 and winds up many reels later, after we've seen these men in action in several campaigns including Saipan, with the homecoming of the wounded. Not satisfied with crowding as many individual stories as he could into the script, Uris also managed to squeeze in quite a few clichés in giving us a tidy cross-section of American youth. He was further aided by Director Raoul Walsh who turned up with some exciting action scenes in CinemaScope and WarnerColor but who also gave the film a sort of Roverboyish do-or-die atmosphere in which our fun-loving, red-blooded boys are just bursting at the seams to get into battle or carry messages to Garcia or prove their virility some way or other.

The remarkable thing about "Battle Cry" is that in spite of its contrived atmosphere—scenes like one in which Major Van Heflin goes to General Raymond Massey and tearfully pleads to lead his well-trained battalion into action—several of the characters come vividly to life—particularly in the romantic interludes. Aldo Ray, as a cynical lumberjack, falls in love with a New Zealand widow (Nancy Olson) who is determined not to be hurt personally by the war again. Tab Hunter portrays what is supposed to be a typical American youth: the handsome, likable, clean-cut boy whom every girl wants to marry—and Mona Freeman does, after our clean-cut boy has an adulterous affair with a USO worker in San Diego. John Lupton plays the studious type who plans to write the great American war novel; he gets plenty of material for his book from his buddies' affairs—and from his own after he falls for a flashy young woman (Anne Francis) who later turns out to be a B-girl. After developing this, the most interesting sub-plot, the film cheats on us by having Lupton killed off. As might be expected in a long war movie like "Battle Cry" there is a great deal of death and sentiment and confusion of morals and fictional bravado. Real-life Marines might find the thing more than a little overdone.

THE English have also turned up with a movie that is crowded with characters. While "Doctor in the House" may be no more realistic as to what goes on during the five years of a medical student's training than is "Battle Cry" about war, the English film is done in good spirit and is so successful in portraying warmth and fun that one comes away from it with a pleasant glow. The students, played by Dirk Bogarde, Kenneth More, Donald Sinden, Donald Houston *et al*, are pretty debonair and Roverboyish about school and life too, but they have a hilariously good time in between classes and operations and examinations.

Director Ralph Thomas doesn't mean for you to take Nicholas Phipps' script seriously. James Robertson Justice is delightful as one of the teaching doctors. Perhaps in spite of all the joking in "Doctor in the House" the story has enough grains of truth to give you some idea of the hard work put in by young men struggling to be doctors. At the end of the picture some make the grade and some don't; these five years have not been all beer and skittles. But whether or not you are convinced that this is how doctors are made, you'll have a good time watching these young men in action, and you'll enjoy the girls (played by Muriel Pavlow, Kay Kendall and others) who also have much to do with this training period. What with the good cast and amusing story and Betty Box' fine production in Technicolor, you can put "Doctor in the House" down as another of those comedies the English design so well for adult audiences.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

THE STAGE

VARIETY

"PLAIN and Fancy" (*at the Mark Hellinger*), a musical portrait of the Amish, begins the week's various critical smorgasbord: a surprise, I note with some pleasure, for the Amish—bearded, buttonless, tenacious of their private peace—would, one might think, uneasily inhabit the musical stage; and worse still, what if they should be patronized or guyed? No fear: the conventional solicitations—all but one—have been gracefully resisted, the situation sketched in its essential charm of rustic wisdom and urban wit, sobriety and sauciness playing against each other with the greatest good will. Raoul Pene duBois has given the physical production some of the tumbled opulence of a cornucopia; beautifully his decors suggest the autumnal Lancastrian season of mists and mellow fruitfulness. The players are everywhere ingenuous and attractive: Barbara Cook as the Amish girl with urban discontents, Richard Derr as the man in the middle (a performance of great tact and sensitivity, this) and Shirl Conway as a lady down from the wicked metropolitan provinces. Indeed, Miss

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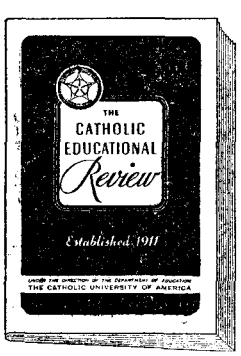

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Conway's difficulties with the dialect, her clear and present desperation amid the pastoral are several of the season's major delights. To the composers (Albert Hague and Arnold Horwitt) thanks for a score competent and ingratiating; to the librettists (Joseph Stein and Will Glickman) gratitude for a book full of tenderness and humor; to Helen Tamiris, admiration for her inventive choreography. Not even a crassly tasteless carnival sequence—a cipher as art, as morality, as dance—can rupture the assured and gathering charm of "Plain and Fancy."

MR. John Cecil Holm's dramatization of Miss Mildred Walker's novel, "The Southwest Corner" (*at the Holiday*) gives something of the same pleasure. Miss Walker's novel—a fable of New England *virtus* threatened by a mindless vulgarity—is a work of pungency and considerable feeling for the regional; the dramatic opportunities it affords are limited but not at all contemptible. For out of these mild domestic felicities and calculated reticences, a small, certain truth emerges, and the life portrayed, though familiar, nonetheless has flavor, sensibility and worth. What Mr. Holm cannot do is project Miss Walker's central figure —an aged lady of Vermont—into visible life; stubbornly the character remains a kind of icon of natural pieties, to which we pay an unreflecting and conventional homage. The larger spiritual reality it is meant to symbolize is only rhetorically evoked, and even an actress of Eva Le Gallienne's great and subtle craft cannot vivify the role's dead center. Far more telling is Enid Markey's fearfully documented portrait of a suburban hollow woman: beginning in a gregarious coarseness, it ends in a kind of genteel terror, an exact and beautifully observed study of the imperceptible stages by which triviality declines into viciousness. It would be pleasant to wish for "The Southwest Corner" the secure and comfortable success it merits, but given the vertiginous tempo of our present theatrical situation, one cannot be at all sanguine about its possibilities.

NOR could we be sanguine about the future of "Festival," a fear that was confirmed with its recent closing at the Longacre. Admittedly, the Spewacks built their farce out of the merest pasteboard and glue, but just as surely, they fleshed that skeleton with some of the brightest comic writing of recent seasons. Albert Marre's staging displayed a consistent visual wit; the performances of Betty Field, Luba Malina and George Voskovec were exercises in free-wheeling intelligent fun worthy of respect. Why then the indifferent press? Mrs. Spewack is, of course, partly right: "no bubble baths, no brothels." But surely that

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is a public failing more than a critical one? All of which is not to diminish the force of her observation that dramatic reviewing has reached this year new depths of—shall we say—irresponsible mindlessness.

"THE Grand Prize" (*at the Plymouth*) is another summer-stock delicacy by Ronald Alexander, whose "Time Out For Ginger"—you will recall—has kept them happy in the hay lo, these many moons. 'Virtue Endanger'd, Ne'er Embarrass'd' one might read as its moralistic subtitle. A patina of reality—here, the sitting-duck world of television—glazes the coldly arranged *amor ex machina*, but no amount of larkish good spirits can conceal the grinding shifts of Mr. Alexander's badly oiled gears. The performance, too, is obvious and somewhat garish, but for Tom Poston's immensely winning sketch of an Ivy Leaguer liberated by Vat 69 from the charcoal-grey *lares et penates* of Madison Avenue.

RICHARD HAYES.

COMMUNICATIONS

"FATHER GILLIS RETIRES"

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: Amongst the various friendly editorial comment upon my "Sursum Corda" column I was particularly happy to find yours [Jan. 28]. You have certainly been very generous and it is good for me to know that although our paths diverted and our opinions upon controversial topics seldom met, you have always had in your heart a kindly thought of me. . . .

(Rev.) JAMES M. GILLIS, C.S.P.

RELIGION ON CAMPUS

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: The discussion in *America* by two Newman Club chaplains regarding the extent of subversion effected among Catholic students on non-Catholic campuses (commented upon editorially by The Commonweal [Dec. 17, 1954]) has made at least one reader wonder whether a complementary discussion of subversion of Catholic students on Catholic college campuses wouldn't now be in order. Perhaps subversion is too harsh a word to describe this latter condition, but I'd be willing to settle for it. Accepting as one may Father Maguire's finding that "smug agnosticism is no longer dominant on the American college campus," one may still raise a question as to the dominance of smug Catholicism on the Catholic college campus, and that succumbing to that kind of subversion

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may, in the long run, if not sooner, be hardly less pernicious than the condition referred to by the two Newman Club chaplains. It can easily lead to that "weak and vacillating Christianity, a partial, truncated Christianity" commented upon by the Catholic Bishops of America in their recent annual statement.

The ingredients that go to make up this particular kind of collegiate Catholicism include: a goodly portion of that Pollyanna Catholicism and Catholic Smart Aleckism described by Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn in the July '54 *Integrity*; that "utter mediocrity of so much of American Catholicism" noted by Will Herberg in his contribution to the Commonweal symposium, *Catholicism in America*; a dash, respectively, of the ghetto and black-and-white mentalities, anti-intellectualism, philistinism and the accompanying suspicion of ideas and the enjoyment of the life of the mind, anything "egghead-ish," and a pronounced deference to the deportment proper to devotees of the glad hand society.

The Catholic and non-Catholic campuses have this in common: their curricula are predominantly vocational and technical and only vestigially liberal. The so-called "culture" courses are scattered in splendid isolation among the far greater number of "practical," i.e. commercially rewarding, courses. This state of academic affairs has, of course, been frequently noted. What is not sufficiently appreciated, however, is that the Catholic college that is only vestigially liberal is also only vestigially Catholic. The typical Catholic college for men is an institution officially administered by a religious order, either of priests or of Brothers. The religious faculty members are far outnumbered by the lay teachers, even, in the continuing elephantiasis of the post World War II period, to the extent of a four or five-to-one ratio. The student body and faculty are mostly Catholics. There are some non-Catholic students and non-Catholic teachers. There is a Catholic chaplain on the campus and a Catholic chapel but, of course, no chapel or chaplain of any other denomination. There may be no compulsory chapel attendance, though on certain days, First Fridays, for example, benediction services are provided for the student as a part of a "religious activities" program which also includes regularly scheduled talks on religious topics. The students are urged to take part in these activities because they are "fitting"; they are not, in the strict academic sense, compulsory. Daily Mass is celebrated in the college chapel for students who wish to attend; the number attending is usually infinitesimal. There is an annual retreat held during the school year when all classes are suspended. The retreat is conducted by priests who give much the same talks they give in the parishes the rest of the year. A course in the Catholic religion is required each year of all students. . . .

All the foregoing adds up to something. It provides what is known as a "Catholic atmosphere." It may be

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pointed out that the "atmosphere" leaves out considerably much of the deeper meaning and real spirit of Catholicism and Catholic culture, of that integrated Catholic way of life that provides the only affirmative answer to secularism, atheistic materialism, and that technological spirit our Holy Father described in his Christmas '53 message. To that objection the comfortable answer is given that it is better to have the Catholic absorb his religiously neutral subject matter (for the Catholic student, like his non-Catholic counterpart, has come to college to acquire skills and techniques, not wisdom) in a Catholic atmosphere rather than in an agnostic atmosphere. He may not receive any deep insights into Catholicism but his cloistered, and somewhat fugitive, virtue protects him from the baneful influence of the secularist world outside. Though the requirements of his technical courses may be such that he leaves his Catholic college campus after four years with only a single course in philosophy, no history, and only a one-semester course in literature, the intellectual short-changing is further justified on the grounds that accrediting agencies and professional licensing groups, realistic people who take a dim view of wisdom as the end of higher education, set the standards. Moreover the young collegian's parents want him to get his "money's worth" out of his expensive four-year academic stay. Let it not be forgotten, either, that there is a religion course required each of the four years. Aren't these courses incomparable sources of wisdom? No, alas, they're not. In intellectual content and approach they are hardly distinguishable from the catechism courses already taken by the majority of the students in their respective Catholic high schools. They can't be dignified by the name of theology. Even if they could, they would still suffer irreparably from their isolated position away from the rest of the curriculum.

Father Maguire offered as one reason why Catholics attend non-Catholic colleges the tragic truth that most Catholics don't know what education is. What is even more tragically true is that the Catholics who do attend Catholic colleges leave their Catholic campuses still ignorant of what education is. They are told, of course, that the end of education is wisdom, but knowing is not necessarily understanding. What relevancy has that abstract knowledge in the light of what they see about them; namely, that in the concrete academic situation, skills and techniques are the end of education, even Catholic higher education? How much is the situation redeemed by being reminded again that the skills and techniques are acquired in a "Catholic atmosphere"?

The Commonweal's editorial on Father Maguire's article was understandably concerned, as was Father Maguire, with the danger "in any sweeping and exaggerated indictment of secular culture," including secular education, of "alienating those men of good will who are now beginning to look to the Church for wis-

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dom and enlightenment." But how about the alienation that is now resulting when these same men of good will try to communicate with our typical Catholic college graduates and find them strangers in the world of ideas, particularly those ideas the non-Catholic intellectual knows are relevant to the complexities of our time? What communication *can* take place between perceptive, educated non-Catholics of good will and Catholic college graduates, professionally competent, but otherwise inarticulate, except for a few phrases and slogans, on the really important issues of the day?

Since they appear in the same Commonweal issue that contains the editorial on Father Maguire's article, the letters of Francis B. Randall and William P. Clancy afford an excellent case in point. Judging from his letter, Mr. Randall is a highly intelligent, liberally educated non-Catholic. He wrote his letter because as a man of good will he sought communication. He received it in admirable fashion. . . . Unfortunately, however, that reply was not typical of the work done by Catholic college graduates. I know from many frustrating experiences what it would mean to bring up in a Catholic college School of Business or School of Engineering class such intellectual stimuli as "liberalism as a valid philosophical approach" . . . .

It will not be out of place here, I hope, or unduly stressing the obvious, to note that the end product of a Catholic college, indeed of all Christian education, which includes the home and the Church as well as the School, has been described with definitive simplicity by Pope Pius XI as "that supernatural man who thinks, judges, and acts constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason illumined by the supernatural light of the example and teaching of Christ." There in the proper Catholic context is that over-used term, "the whole man." It is very necessary to ask now, again, with that vastly increased enrollment in higher education imminent, whether, in fact, Catholic colleges are producing such men; whether, in the terminology of our machine age, the typical curricula of a Catholic college are geared to the production of supernatural men, Christian humanists. What the Catholic college should be contributing to the Church in America is an educated laity, not merely a professionally competent one, real and undeniable though the vocational needs of our students are. The Catholic Church needs whole men, not half men. There is strong evidence, alas, even in 1955 that Catholic higher education has still to take to heart the charge of Robert Maynard Hutchins made almost two decades ago (Father William Cunningham has referred to it as "The Hutchins Blast"), "Catholic education is not Catholic enough. . . . The best service Catholic education can perform for the nation and all education is to show that the intellectual tradition can again be made the heart of higher education."

(Brother) CORMAC PHILIP, F.S.C.

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Critics' Choice of Catholic Books

GEORGE G. HIGGINS

THE Moral Foundation of Democracy. By John H. Hallowell. University of Chicago. $3.50. Professor Hallowell of Duke University, meeting the secularists on their own terms, persuasively defends the thesis that democracy is a "moral enterprise" which cannot and will not survive if it cuts itself off from the tradition of Natural Law as enriched and safeguarded by Christian theology. The fact that such a thoroughly Christian treatise on political philosophy should have been presented by a non-Catholic scholar as a series of lectures under the auspices of a non-Catholic university is an encouraging sign of the times.

The Public Philosophy. By Walter Lippmann. Little, Brown. $3.50. The "public philosophy" is a synonym for the Natural Law, which "does not have to be discovered or invented . . . but does have to be revived and renewed" if liberal democracy, now in precipitate decline, is to survive. The rising tide of agnosticism is not the only cause of our present peril. Another source of the trouble, closely related, of course, to the first, is what Lippmann characterizes as "a functional derangement of the relationship between the mass of the people and the government," with the former too often dominating the latter. This section of Lippmann's book reads like an extended commentary on the following sentence from Pope Pius XII's letter to the 1954 Semaines Sociales: ". . . to protect the liberty of the citizen and at the same time serve the common good by active cooperation of all the living forces of the nation, the public powers must exercise their activity with firmness and independence." Lippmann is a "conservative" in the best sense of a word which is currently in danger of being despoiled by some of those who are claiming it for their own. His latest book—in many ways his best—is neither as profound nor as closely reasoned as Professor Hallowell's treatise, but, like the latter and for the same reasons, it is an encouraging straw in the ideological wind.

The Life of John J. Keane. By Patrick Henry Ahern. Bruce. $6.50. The definitive biography of the first Rector—who also deserves to be honored as the founder — of the Catholic University of America. Archbishop Keane was at once a great educator, a great churchman, a great citizen, and, above all else, a man of sterling Christian character, with more than the average share of humility and trust in the Providence of God. He ended his days as Archbishop of Dubuque after a series of painful detours. He paid a heavy price for his fearless dedication to the truth. It is good to see him vindicated, at long last, by a competent scholar who takes his place in the distinguished company of Peter Guilday, John T. Ellis (his mentor and professor), Henry Browne, Coleman Barry, and the others who are responsible for making the Department of American Church History at the Catholic University of America a worthy monument to the University's illustrious founder.

Pio Nono: A Study in European Politics and Religion in the 19th Century. By E. E. Y. Hales. Kenedy. $4. Nobody should presume to write about the Syllabus of Errors until he has first read this remarkably good biography of Pope Pius IX, who might well be characterized as the most misunderstood pope in the history of the Church. Professor Hales provides much of the background material necessary for an adequate understanding, not only of Pius IX's troubled pontificate (the second longest in the history of the Papacy), but, even more important, of the subsequent policy of the Church with reference to "liberalism" and contemporary secularism.

The Catholic Church in World Affairs. Edited by Waldemar Gurian and M. A. Fitzsimons. University of Notre Dame. $4.25. A symposium of sixteen chapters on the manifold religious, cultural, and socio-political problems, challenges, and opportunities confronting the Universal Church in the second half of the twentieth century. A timely companion volume to *Church and Society* (Edited by Father Joseph Moody of Cathedral College in New York), which was recommended in this column last year.

Of Sacraments and Sacrifice. By Clifford Howell, S.J. Liturgical Press. $2. A popular, but solidly theological exposition of the sacramental life of the Church, with the emphasis on active participation by the laity in the liturgy. Father Howell is a born teacher, well known in this country for his "liturgical missions." His book is made to order for study clubs and Catholic Action groups—and, let us be frank about the matter, for busy preachers as well. At least one American priest has borrowed from it shamelessly but unashamedly in preparing occasional Sunday sermons on the Mass.

More Blessed Than Kings: Essays on Certain Minor Characters in the Four Gospels. By Vincent McCorry, S.J. Newman. $3. Painless, humorous, but profound, spiritual reading for the butcher, the baker and the candlestickmaker — and, again, for priests as well as laymen. Father McCorry, author of *America's* weekly Gospel meditation, "The Word," has a genius for throwing new light on neglected Scriptural passages which we have all read or which have been read to us a thousand times without our realizing how we might apply them effectively to our work-a-day lives.

JOHN W. SIMONS

THESE several books were either written by Catholics or impinge closely on matters of presumable importance to Catholics. A few will undoubtedly appear on the others lists, but deliberately to avoid the obvious would be an injustice. The listing is random.

The Lord. By Romano Guardini. Regnery. $6.50. Monsignor Guardini meditates with a brooding luminosity which stimulates one's own

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meditations. Here is a whole spiritual reading program for everyman's Lent.

English Literature in the Sixteenth Century. By C. S. Lewis. Oxford. $6.50. As you will have suspected, the style and personality of the author triumph over the formidable scholarly paraphernalia of this latest volume in the Oxford History of English Literature series. "The legend of the Renaissance is a Renaissance legend." Things like this happen on almost every page. Superbly wrong-headed at times, but never dull.

Medieval Essays. By Christopher Dawson. Sheed & Ward. $3.50. Mr. Dawson's concept of Christian culture has been so misunderstood by the harried and the hurried that it is refreshing to be rid of his commentators. These twelve essays, each a miracle of synthesis, provide an authentic entry into the rich Dawsonian universe.

The Third Revolution. By Karl Stern. Harcourt, Brace. $4. A splendid vindication of the compatibility between psychoanalysis and Catholicism. There are, besides, a stern arraignment of positivism and a disconcerting portrayal of the cybernetic man.

The Poetic Drama of Paul Claudel. By Joseph Chiari. Kenedy. $3.75. This work asks all the right questions, but an idiosyncratic theology gets in the way of the author's judgments, literary and other. But I know of no other vernacular work on Claudel which is so consistently good.

ELIZABETH BARTELME

THE happiest consideration in being asked to recommend a few exceptional Catholic books of the past publishing year is the fortuitousness of the choices one is able to make. I have found the following particularly valuable.

At the top of the 1954 list I would place *The Lord,* by Romano Guardini (Regnery, $6.50), an exhaustive meditation on the life of Christ, beautifully and profoundly presented. This book of Monsignor Guardini's is surely a masterpiece and I cannot recommend it too highly. It has been a fortunate year, too, which has seen the publication of Father John La Farge's autobiography, *The Manner Is Ordinary* (Harcourt, Brace, $4.75), the absorbing account of a rich life dedicated to the service of God and man, particularly in the field of race relations. Of the lives of the saints published during the past year, *Catherine of Siena* (Sheed & Ward, $3.50), Sigrid Undset's final book, is probably the outstanding. Although it does not capture so vividly as her great novels the sweep and grandeur of medieval life, it is nevertheless a superior achievement in hagiography and a fine portrait of a remarkable saint. And speaking of saints, I cannot resist including *The Love Letters of Phyllis McGinley* (Viking, $3.) whose "saints without tears" are a most lighthearted lot, and whose happy, witty verse has a tender gaiety which weds heart to humor. I would like also to mention, as a noteworthy publishing experiment, Doubleday's Image Books (50c to 95c), a series of paperback reprints of Catholic books, launched this past fall and including several excellent titles, such as Georges Bernanos' *Diary of a Country Priest,* Karl Adam's *The Spirit of Catholicism* and Philip Hughes' *A Popular History of the Catholic Church.*

J. N. MOODY

THE Reformation in England, Vol. III. By Philip Hughes. Macmillan. $7.50. With this volume the distinguished British historian has completed his comprehensive study of the English Reformation. The two earlier volumes surveyed the climate of life in England in 1517 and then covered the reigns of Henry, Edward and Mary. This concentrates on the Age of Elizabeth with an extension into the Stuarts to cover the Gunpowder Plot. It was the unanimous choice for the 1954 award of the John Gilmary Shea Prize of the American Catholic Historical Association. Splendidly written, it is the most complete and objective study of a movement which had a decisive influence on the history of Western civilization. Father Hughes stresses the responsibility of the official guardians of the Church in this catastrophe of England's loss to the faith.

Saint Bridget of Sweden. By Johannes Jorgensen. Longmans. $8.50. There are encouraging signs in Sweden of a new interest in Catholicism which is particularly noticeable among intellectuals. If it is to grow, Swedes must reexamine their Medieval Catholic heritage and Catholics in other lands must interest themselves in the Swedish past. No better approach could be made than through the life of this fourteenth century saint, who labored mightly in Sweden and in all Europe for reform in the Church and for peace among the burgeoning national states. Though her great designs were not achieved, she left a tremendous record of personal sanctity and of intelligent dedication to the renewal of Christian society. In these volumes she has found a biographer worthy of her stature, a man of the North who could understand her, a Catholic writer of eminence who can do justice to her spirit.

Catherine of Siena. By Sigrid Undset. Sheed & Ward. $3.50. This is the final work from the pen of the Norwegian convert who has enriched both literature and Catholicism. Her best known novels have their setting in her beloved homeland. It was fitting that before her death she should have turned to her second spiritual home —Italy—and have found inspiration in a woman who molded the public life of her age. It was Christ Who broke the invisible wall that the civilization of antiquity had built between man and woman. It was His teaching that all were created in the same divine image that ultimately made possible the flowering of Catherine of Siena. The prose of this volume is superb. Its content is refreshing to any who have scanned Simone de Beauvoir's plaints on the fate of woman in history.

The Lord. By Romano Guardini. Regnery. $6.50. The leading Catholic philosopher and theologian of Germany writes on the greatest

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theme that could engage the mind of man—the personality of Jesus Christ. Monsignor Guardini is more than a philosopher: he is a courageous Christian leader who sustained the people of Berlin in the frightening days of bombing and defeat; he is an intellectual who has won respect for Catholicism in German universities and has influenced generations of German youth. He brings all his equipment to this task of interpreting the timeless Christ to an age which needs Him so profoundly.

A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture. Thomas Nelson and Sons. $20. There is no more hopeful sign in our contemporary religious life than the heightened interest of Catholics in the Bible. Yet contrary to the naïve belief of the early Protestants, the Scriptures are not self-explanatory nor is their meaning easily grasped by the simple believer. The great barriers of language, geography and culture must be broken before the full riches of the Word of God can be appropriated. Without the experts in the various original languages, we would not even have a text; without other experts to interpret, we would lose much of the meaning. Here a distinguished team of British scholars bring the latest research to bear on the sacred writing with most satisfying results. Catholics who bear scars of scepticism about the veracity of Old Testament stories will find it most helpful. Properly classified as a work of reference, it should be available in parish and school libraries. Most decidedly it should be consulted.

WILLIAM P. CLANCY

The Golden String. By Bede Griffiths, O.S.B. Kenedy. $3.50. This newly published account of an English Benedictine's discovery of the Church and of a monastic vocation is much more than another conversion story. It is, I think, the most distinguished Catholic autobiography of recent years, a work of great intellectual and imaginative power. And like all great autobiographies, it has a significance far beyond the life of one man.

The Third Revolution. By Karl Stern. Harcourt, Brace. $4. Catholic prejudices against psychoanalysis have been many—and widely publicized. This book, at once a critique and a defense of psychoanalysis from a Catholic point of view, should do much to dispel them.

Pio Nono. By E. E. Y. Hales. Kenedy. $4. The nineteenth century continues to haunt us, and one of its most controversial figures, Pius IX, continues to be the villain in most liberal accounts of the age. This reevaluation of Pio Nono by a non-Catholic British historian demonstrates with admirable objectivity that, far from misunderstanding the nineteenth century, Pius IX understood it only too well and, understanding it, had to oppose it as he did.

Black Popes. By Archbishop Roberts, S. J. Sheed & Ward. $2.50. This loosely organized book is yet an incisive and remarkably critical consideration of the uses and abuses of authority in the Church. Written by an eminent Churchman, it is a provocative and stimulating work.

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The Church's Human Element

THE HUMAN ELEMENT IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. By Paul Simon. Newman. $2.75.

By H. A. REINHOLD

PAUL Simon, who died as the Provost of the Metropolitan Chapter of Paderborn and who had been professor of philosophy before, was one of the best loved priests of modern Germany. He belonged to the original group of students at Bonn who one day walked into the ancient Abbey of Maria Laach and asked for a "liturgical week." Thus through student and lay initiative the formidable German liturgical movement came into being in Holy Week of 1914.

The consciousness of the "layman" always stayed alive in the heart of this highly cultured, intelligent and deeply religious priest. The witness of his deep concern is this book which was written at the height of the Nazi onslaught on the Church in Germany in 1936, and may now, belatedly, find its audience in our country at a time when the Church has come under wide attack.

If we suffered this attack for our implementation of the Gospel, we could, like the martyrs of old, count it as the glory and fulfillment of our Master's teaching. But, take away criticism made of Catholics because of their position on birth prevention, the Legion of Decency, mixed marriages, private schools, loyalty to the Holy See, there would still be more than enough material to use in criticizing the Church and her members. That is what Paul Simon calls "the human element in the Church."

Obviously inspired by Dostoievsky—as Romano Guardini and most other German Catholic intellectuals have been—Simon starts out with the three basic temptations of Jesus and establishes them as the fundamental pitfalls of His Mystical Body —with the difference that the human element will, of course, come out less gloriously than its Divine Master. How basic the temptations which the Devil placed before Jesus are can be seen by the prominent place the Church has assigned to their annual reading: the first Sunday in Lent.

The first temptation for the human element in the Church is present when "earthly aims are pursued by means of the power attaching to a religious mission. . . . Religion must never be a means." The second temptation is "an appeal to credulity and mass-instinct," the use of means that do not correspond with the mission of spreading the Kingdom of God. . . .," the exploitation of "the crude desire of the multitude for a miracle." Christ rejected "convincing proof that He was the Messiah . . . a Messianic revolution." The third temptation is the "bowing down" before the principle of power and success and the admission of its validity in the religious field. These three temptations are the reasons why Christ rejected Satan and why God may reject "the human element in His Church," and yet many lukewarm members do not take offense when representatives of the Church fail in their resistance to them.

Father Simon thus raises the whole question of criticism of the Church above the turmoil of interdenominational quarrel. He examines the idealized early Church, using the earliest witness, Saint Paul, and he finds enough to show that the human element was present then, the same as now. And this is as Christ wanted it: "nowhere is it recorded that He promised them they would be supermen . . . not even . . . outstanding men." As "wheat and wine, oil and water" were the most significant liturgical elements, so the Church, folk and clergy, were taken from the average man. The "angelism"—to vary its concept—of the purists contradicts the whole system of redemption. The human element should not be thought of as a "falling away from a divine idea . . . a detraction from the Gospel." It is essential to the very idea of Chris-

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tianity as embodied in human flesh.

Father Simon discusses the need for reform in the Church as an ever-present "crisis," sometimes so strong as to break the ties. But the seceders are not alone the guilty ones; as he courageously states, the loyal remnant shares their guilt in some measure. It comes to mind how, one hundred and fifty years ago, Saint Clement Hofbauer said that the people who went with Luther were to a great extent concerned in maintaining their "piety," while the remaining often failed to observe the commands of the Gospel and "were themselves partners in the offense and disloyalties of the seceders."

This whole book is a new kind of apologetics, a kind of defense that gives the attacker credit for intelligence and honesty. Its publication coincides with the publication of *Black Popes,* the even more vigorous book of Archbishop Roberts and with quite a number of warnings from the Pope himself. One thing is sure: the Church is becoming aware that we cannot merely go on feeling fine, secure and triumphant. We face a very honest world, apart from professional, sectarian detractors, and it is not our frailty that shocks them; it is our pride, our narrowness and our unwillingness to take the slightest criticism. Paul Simon's book should help us to see our temptations as they really are.

Woman

THE ETERNAL WOMAN. By Gertrud von le Fort. Translated by Marie Cecilia Buehrle. Bruce. $3.50.

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THOUGH the title of Gertrud von le Fort's book might lead one to expect another banal essay on the role of women in the modern world, one is agreeably surprised to find instead a stimulating treatise on symbolism, with emphasis on woman as symbol. The author brings to bear on the subject a deep and poetic, though perhaps not precise, insight, supported with knowledge

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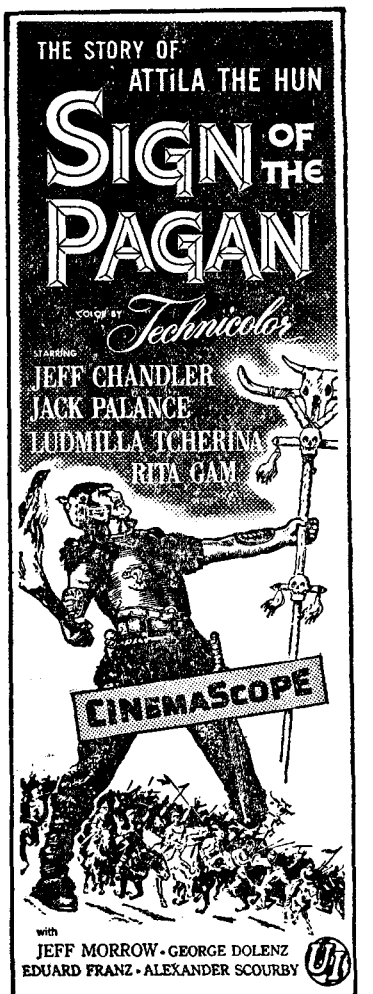
of literature and medieval philosophy. She thereby casts a light on much literary allusion that might otherwise be obscure or misunderstood.

In explaining symbolism she notes that "symbols are the language of an invisible reality becoming articulate in the realm of the visible." Any created being, with its temporal limitations, in the presence of what is absolute and timeless, does not appear any longer as a value in itself but as a thought of the eternal—as a vessel or symbol. Deeply rooted as such thinking is in religious tradition, it also extends fundamentally to any cosmic view of reality and has been taken up in the literatures of many eras. This language of symbols has the persistent motif of the "mirror," which is a kind of archetype of symbols, a symbol of the symbol itself. The "mirror" means that the creature shows forth the Divine thought, that it is a thing revealed in its true nature, not in its particular concreteness.

Woman, because her quality is first of all universal and timeless rather than particular and of the moment, stands for the creature itself as an image of the Divine. Such is Beatrice of the *Divine Comedy,* in which the "mirror" image is dominant. Unlike the generality of theorists who examine woman's role solely in terms of physical or spiritual motherhood, the author projects a three-fold interrelated role, symbolized by the virgin, the spouse, and the mother.

Gertrud von le Fort traces her thesis through the characters of Sigrid Undset's *Ida Elizabeth* and *Kristin Lavransdatter,* Ruth Schaumann's *Yves,* Paul Claudel's "Tidings Brought to Mary," and the Magnificat. The book thus becomes a contribution to literature, to studies of symbolism and of woman as a subject in art forms. Though there are illuminating comments on the feminist movement (analyzed as not too masculine but too feminine) and some gestures at practical applications, the book achieves less in this area. In the author's own words *The Eternal Woman* deals with "the religious significance of



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femininity and its ultimate reflection in God."

Max Jordan's introduction notes that excerpts from this book were first made available to American readers in The Commonweal in 1936. The present English translation, following on German, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Danish versions, represents the best efforts of both translator and publisher to produce a work of high quality in its own right. *The Eternal Woman* deserves to be widely read and pondered, in the light of its main purpose and the subsidiary one.

Poor of Paris

ABBÉ PIERRE AND THE RAGPICKERS OF EMMAUS. By Boris Simon. Translated by Lucie Noel. Kenedy. $3.75.

By EDWARD S. SKILLIN

IT comes as somewhat of a surprise in the end to find oneself wondering where spontaneous emotion leaves off and deliberate art begins in this apparently unadorned account of the mending of broken lives. For the greater part of his spare narrative about Parisian outcasts Boris Simon writes objectively and sustains a subdued emotional tone, only to burst through in the final pages of the book to a rousing climax.

His is not an easy task. Abbé Pierre's plans that have enabled the helpless and defeated to help themselves, and one another, develop gradually and for the most part unspectacularly. The moments of drama and excitement are submerged in the grinding daily battle for mere survival. The effect of homes of their own, and a community to fight for, on men and women previously injured, abandoned and alone is hard to convey tellingly in so many words—particularly as regeneration is often but partial or only begun.

Mr. Simon's formula is twofold. He concentrates attention on a few members of the Emmaus community. Among them is Djibouti, a former truck driver whose wife had abandoned him and disposed of all his belongings while he was in a German prison camp; several years later he had killed a woman and her baby girl in an auto accident one rainy night. Others are the Vatiers, a young couple without a roof for their heads, due to no fault of their own, whose new-born infant had just died of sheer exposure. The author presents the plight of each newcomer poignantly yet succinctly. Abbé Pierre himself remains in the background of the narrative most of the time; yet his presence is always felt. This is but one more sign of the author's authentic touch.

Besides sustaining a lively interest in the progress of certain individuals and families that have had the good fortune to make their way to Emmaus, Mr. Simon keeps an anxious focus on the ups and downs of the community as a whole—and on the feeling of solidarity which plays so large a part in each individual's rebirth. One group, for instance, helps keep the whole enterprise going with what it can salvage day after day from the stench-filled and fly-infested Paris dumps. It is indeed Boris Simon's ability to identify the reader with the anxieties, obstacles and achievements of both individual and community that gives this stirring narrative its great impact.

Parish Life

SOCIAL RELATIONS IN THE URBAN PARISH. By Joseph H. Fichter, S.J. University of Chicago. $5.50.

By JOSEPH P. FITZPATRICK

WHEN parish sociology in the United States is mentioned, the name of Father Fichter springs immediately to mind. One of the pioneers in the field, he will figure largely in its development. He received greatest attention when he published *Southern Parish* in 1951, containing some of his extensive research in a New Orleans parish.

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The present work does not deal with a particular parish but contains the results of Father Fichter's extensive reading, and combines the widespread research he has been doing in a number of parishes. It presents a great deal of valuable information to the reader, and its theoretical discussions make it a welcome and significant addition to the growing number of books about the parish in the modern city.

Father Fichter proposes in the book a scheme of investigation and analysis which could be applied in any parish inquiry. He attempts to define empirically just what a parishioner is in terms of his contact with and his participation in parish life. The "nuclear parishioner or leader" is the heart of parish life. Baptized, faithful to Easter duties, a frequent communicant, he is active in parish organizations. The "model parishioner," the ordinary Catholic, is in the majority. Sufficiently faithful and in contact to be obviously identified as a Catholic, his unity with others, nevertheless, is based on social class or secular interests rather than on grace or faith. The "marginal parishioner," will be found on the periphery of Catholic life, almost completely immersed in the values and practices of a secular culture. The "dormant parishioners" have, for all practical purposes, fallen away.

Father Fichter then attempts to show the relationship of age to religious practice, and the effect of urban mobility and social status on Catholic life. He analyzes the increasing and difficult roles the priest must play; the relationships of laity to each other; the structure of parish societies; the significance of the parochial school in creating solidarity in the parish. In a final section, he discusses technical problems of parish research, examines conceptual schemes used in the analysis of the parish; outlines major issues in parish sociology (actually a review of the comments made about *Southern Parish*); and discusses some ethical problems involved in sociological research. He concludes with a statement on the utility of social science for religion.

The reader will discover some interesting details about parish life: the fact that mobility does not seem to hinder the religious practice of Catholics; that devout practice is poorest in the thirty to forty year age group; that our much criticized teen-agers turned up with the best religious practice, and gave scant evidence of the delinquency and immorality often attributed to them; that in one inquiry, only six per cent of the parishioners were found to be "nuclear"; in another, twenty per cent were found to be "marginal" after all the dormant Catholics had been eliminated; the "dormant" Catholics in a third inquiry numbered twenty-eight per cent. Despite a lack of clarity in some of the author's statistics, evidence is clear that dormant and marginal Catholics are alarmingly numerous.

This work will be carefully examined. The unconverted, who still want tangible evidence of the value of social research for parish life, may criticize the book because it does not come up with a formula for the immediate regeneration of parish life. "The statistics tell us only what we always knew," is a ready answer of many who do not appreciate that significant scientific insights come only after long and patient efforts, sometimes over generations. On the other hand, those who understand the pains that must be taken in research will congratulate Father Fichter for the example of consistent inquiry which he is setting for others. His book is another pioneering step of a scholarly priest who never feared to push his way into uncharted areas.

On more technical grounds, questions may be raised about the author's use of value judgments which are evident throughout the work. This objection was raised against his *Southern Parish* and he handles the issue very ably in the present work. As Father Fichter had stated in *Southern Parish*: "One of the major objectives of this research was to discover the obstacles to the realization of the 'ideal' parochial system." This means that he must repeatedly evaluate the result of his inquiries in terms of what is or is not ideal. It means

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that he must first determine what the ideal of parish life is, what he calls the "practical ideology" of Catholics in contrast to their actual behavior. In this matter, he exposes himself to controversy, and perhaps does not guard himself sufficiently against the charge that he interprets some of his research to confirm his own ideas.

It is precisely in this area in which important questions must be raised about the relationship of Catholic life and faith to the social institutions in which Catholics are living. The relationship of the Church to the world has always been a problem. Repeatedly Father Fichter hints that there is a ". . . specifically Catholic kind of solidarity based on supernatural love . . ."; that the nuclear parishioner ". . . does not attempt to 'adapt' . . . principles . . . to the so-called cultural expectations of the society in which he lives . . ."; that ". . . the religious institution is pivotal for him, and in this regard he tends to 'go against' the culture in which he lives."

There are many senses in which these statements are true and, in context, the reader will see the meaning which Father Fichter gives them. But they raise the question whether purely natural solidarities have not always played an important part in uniting Catholics. What have been called Catholic solidarities, appear now perhaps to have been more fundamentally "Irish" or "Polish" or "French Canadian" solidarities. There is the question also whether there will not always be a large area of social life which is neutral. And to what extent can one define a social institution as "Catholic"? Would this mean that there is such a thing as a "Catholic society," or a Catholic form of behavior? What happens when the form must be changed by social development? More light on those questions will no doubt be provided in future discussions by Father Fichter, and by the empirical data which his untiring industry will provide. Meantime we can be grateful for the present publication and the insight it gives for the better understanding of the American parish.

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Ironic Execution

A NEW HANDBOOK ON HANGING. By Charles Duff. Regnery. $3.50.

By FRANK GETLEIN

AS the name implies, *A New Handbook on Hanging* is an attack of capital punishment written in the ironic mode. Originally published in 1928, the book created a stir in England and was pushed in America by Clarence Darrow. The present edition has been "diligently compared and revised in accordance with the most recent developments in the art." Occasionally the diligence is too evident, as when a list of famous murder trials, current in 1928 and summoning up by their very names much of the world caught in amber by "The Front Page" continues into 1953. Despite the diligence there is an old-fashioned air about the whole enterprise, which some will find refreshing, some annoying. I found it both.

The very notion of a long, seriously intended political argument conducted in irony is refreshing in an age when irony is almost the exclusive property of the poets. Political discourse has adopted the sincerity of the television commercial and the billboard. Because irony is a mildly elusive thing, because it never says what it means directly and frequently says the opposite of what it means, in a time of nervousness and lack of aesthetic awareness, political irony can even be dangerous. In most cases the worst that the ironist asks you to believe of his opponent is his pure stupidity. Very little sincere political argument today stops at that. Subversive conspiracy to give the country, on the one hand, to commissars, foreign or domestic, and, on the other, to Jay Gould and Samuel Insull, is the logical and usual end of contemporary political style. From the point of view of style, Richard Nixon and Walter Reuther have much more in common than either imagines.

Hence the refreshment and hence the old-fashioned air of the *Handbook on Hanging*. Charles Duff

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sets out to demonstrate only the stupidity of the advocates of capital punishment and, as one who hasn't given much thought to the question in years, I must say the demonstration is a success. Mr. Duff, a lawyer, is a master of the scholarly digression. While resolutely pretending to be moving in a straight line he constantly performs graceful arcs and arabesques through time and space and ideas.

Perhaps the very success of the demonstration against capital punishment is what impairs the book as an exercise in irony. The ironist must be double faced and it is the face that is being mocked that must always present itself to the public. Now and again Mr. Duff loses himself and speaks quite directly against hanging. When he does so for any length of time the tone of the book disappears and the tone of any-tract-at-all dominates. There is a detachment necessary to absolute irony that Duff hasn't quite attained. You get it in Swift and when they're most successful, you get it in Huxley and Waugh. It is really an aesthetic nihilism which takes genuine delight in the perfection of idiocy revealed in the object its surveys. Whether the normally ironic mind rises or descends to reach this absolute I do not know, but whatever the direction, Mr. Duff hasn't made the trip.

CRITICS

Monsignor George G. Higgins is Director of the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference.

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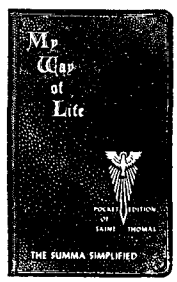

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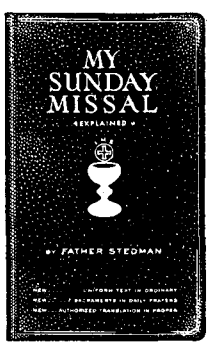

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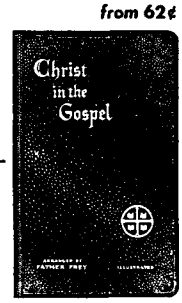

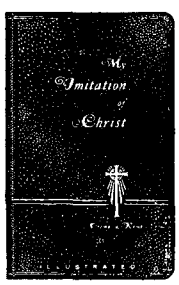

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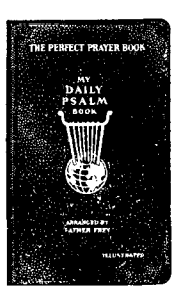

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